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The Milwaukee School of Engineering

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WMSE IS BACK!

by Keith Bodoh

On March 17, 1991, WMSE returned to the 24 hour program day. Ten years earlier, WMSE-FM shocked Milwaukee with its bold and new "messe" radio program. In 1982, WMSE was the second best radio station in Milwaukee -- at least that's what the Milwaukee Journal's "The Big Beat" rock poll reported. The unexpected popularity of this young station only came after three tireless years of effort. Let's go back some 60 years to where the MSOE community first tasted radio broadcasting.

In September of 1922, WIAO first aired as a 100 watt AM station. This was the first radio station in the Milwaukee area and it was funded by MSOE. In 1924, the call letters were changed to WSOE. The signal was increased to 1000 watts in 1926. The following year, Hearst Broadcasting obtained the rights to the station and changed the call letter to WISN. In the 70's, WSOE aired again as a 1/10 watt AM station. The station was operated by members of the WSOE Radio Broadcasters Club (RBC).

Three members from RBC, Dean Hock, John Ehardt and Greg West, proposed the idea of WMSE-FM to the MSOE administration in 1978. The idea was accepted but the work remained. Where could WMSE-FM find room to operate such that it would be accessible and highly visible to the public? Where could they find the necessary equipment? Most of all, would they get an FCC license to operate the station?

MSOE located the station on the ground floor of Margaret Loock Hall which had been recently vacated by Student Life. The office layout was decided and the equipment was either built from scratch or reconditioned. More than once, applications for an FCC license were completed. All this work was done by students from the Radio Club. Everett Cobb, an MSOE alumnus, donated $30,000 to purchase the FM-stereo transmitter. Finally, on March 17, 1981, WMSE-FM aired its first sound.

The new station was born and operated on a very low budget. This meant that there was little money for building the music library. WMSE did not receive the popular music from producers. As a result, WMSE's selection was different than any other in Milwaukee. In general, the DJs decided what to

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Should MSOE Move to Five Year Engineering Programs?

I have heard this question more than once and now it has come up, again. Have you looked closely at the tuition for '91-92? It is up only 8.9 percent. However, this price only covers 12 to 19 credits. Students pay an additional charge for each credit over 19. In recent years the credit limit has been 20. Why was this changed? I can only speculate that the tuition burden has been purposely shifted to those who take extra classes -- classes in addition to what is required.

The bachelor degree programs at MSOE have standard schedules to be completed in four years. The courses offered each quarter are built on these schedules. All the four year bachelor degree programs and MSOE require between 202 and 207 credits. To graduate in four years the student must take about 17 credits per quarter. Many students must repeat dropped or failed classes often extending their expected graduation date. In fact, 27 percent of the original 1985 class graduated in four years -- over 50 percent of the class has graduated to date. Over the past ten years, the trend shows more students falling behind schedule. The change in tuition policy may contribute to this trend.

What would be the consequences of moving to five year programs? The cost of an engineering degree would certainly increase due to the fifth year of tuition. Students would remain longer, increasing the student body which would put a greater demand on the school facilities. Finally, the whole project would involve endless hours of careful planning.

On the other hand, students may benefit from a five year program. Course load can be lessened. Other technical classes can be added to give students a broader education. Most of all, students will have time to put more effort in class work. College is often the last place where we are taught in the classroom environment.

-Keith

The Last Ten Years at WMSE

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play and when. This became known as "messe" radio (from MSE).

In the first months, WMSE's audience grew rapidly. The press noticed this, too. Many articles and reviews were written by both the Journal and the Sentinel. According the Journal's "The Big Beat" rock poll, WMSE placed second in 1982 and first in 1983 as Milwaukee's favorite radio stations.

All this while no one seemed to notice the vast differences of thought between MSOE administration and the WMSE staff. The MSOE administration saw WMSE as a student club that captured the interest of Milwaukee with their unconventional "messe" radio. The WMSE staff saw the radio station as a crusade for musical variety in radio that expresses an acoustical art form.

In November of 1981, Doug Geren was hired as general manager under Vice President of Administration Joseph DeCarlo. DeCarlo explained to the Insight, "At 1000 watts, all of a sudden you become very noticeable to the public at large." Geren, who was a student at MSOE, had several years of radio experience. He bounced around many stations such as WKTI and WMYX in Milwaukee and WJOL in

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not surprising that this (non)solution fails miserably. Historically, the most practiced form of protest open to nonsmokers has been passive resistance: shut up and deal with it or move. I, for one, have practiced passive resistance against MSOE smoke-abuse with Gandhi-esque resolve for the two years I've been here, and have found it--not surprisingly--ineffective. The only other option open to nonsmokers is to risk ridicule and probable bodily harm in suggesting to a smoker that some minor behavioral modification might be in order. Smokers are notoriously vigilant about their "right" to smoke, and do not take kindly to the slightest suggestion that they employ some extracurricular habit-management techniques. Besides being an additional hazard, this politer-than-necessary technique is fairly useless. Again, if you (the nonsmokers) look around MSOE for some indication of smoking regulations or restrictions, you will not any find evidence to support your case.

It would be a real plus for MSOE to establish **clearly defined** smoking regulations that are of benefit to both nonsmokers and smokers. Surely the smokers would agree to some form of compromise, given the current trend in smoke-free public buildings. At the very least, smoking should be restricted in heavily traveled halls and main entrances. It does little good to limit smoking to randomly and indiscriminately chosen areas when nonsmokers must travel through them to get around campus. It would also be a nice gesture on the part of MSOE administration to designate a small smoke-free area where students can lounge and socialize.

To those smokers that show some awareness and restraint in where and when they exercise their freedom to smoke, you deserve the thanks and respect of all nonsmokers. To those smokers that expect the nonsmokers to "deal with it or move," I'll see you in chemo in about 35 years, and hey, thanks for the smokes.

The First Ten Years at WMSE

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Joliet, Illinois. Geren came from mainstream radio stations to the general manager position at WMSE.

Soon Geren made changes. Geren moved to "block" programming which meant that each type of music was designated a two to three hour segment on a weekly rotation. This would attract a wider audience by "tuning in" to the tastes of the audience. The WMSE staff was opposed to the block format. The new format, devised by Geren, infested mainstream concepts into the "messe" radio. Many staff members voiced their concerns to Geren, MSOE administration, the student body, and sometimes over the air.

The situation reached a climax in 1982. MSOE revoked the charter of the radio broadcasters club (RBC). Some DJs continued to ignore the "block" format and went so far as an on-air campaign to save "messe" radio. As a result, Geren and DeCarlo fired seven students (one was due to on-air obscenities). Some of these students were instrumental in the formation of WMSE.

Eventually the smoke settled down. WMSE became a department under the MSOE administration. Block programming remained, although, the DJs were only loosely bound to the format. Most of all, WMSE did not play the mainstream Top 40 music, remaining dedicated to the music that made them popular.

WMSE continued to upgrade their equipment and raise money for operation. In 1983, Bob Betts replaced Geren's position as station manager. The following year, WMSE became the first Milwaukee radio station to get a compact disc player. This CD player and one CD were donated by Everett Cobb.

In December 1987, MSOE banned all heavy metal and other selections of music that were considered immoral or objectional. J. Bryant VanCronkhite, director of college relations and special assistant to the president, and Betts responded to a number of calls objecting to the music. Several months passed as the press criticized the censorship. In March 1989, the WMSE administration revised the ban on heavy metal. Only heavy metal music from local bands would be considered if they were not satanic and were free of "dirty lyrics". No heavy metal program would scheduled, though.

About the same time that heavy metal returned, WMSE administration announced that WMSE-FM would change to an 18 hour schedule from 6:00 AM to 12:00 AM. Potential security problems at the radio station or in the residence hall prompted the decision. Many members of the staff objected to the change since the current audience after midnight would be denied alternative music. Others were concerned about the additional abuse to the equipment through the daily power-up and power-down.

In the fall of 1989, Rod Gnerlich became the MSOE Executive Director of Public Relations, which included WMSE. One of his greatest contributions was the "executive committee". This committee united the staff of WMSE with MSOE administrators to discuss problem on a regular basis.

The formation of the "executive committee" marks the rebirth of WMSE-FM. 1981 saw the united efforts of students and administration in building WMSE-FM. 1991 has seen WMSE staff and MSOE administration resurrect an older and wiser WMSE-FM. On March 17, 1991, WMSE returned to the 24 hour/day programming.